



Bridgewater State University Virtual Commons - Bridgewater State University

Communication Studies Faculty Publications

Communication Studies Department

2008

Defining the enemy for the post-Cold War world: Bill Clinton's foreign policy discourse on Somalia and Haiti

Jason A. Edwards

Bridgewater State College, j3edwards@bridgew.edu

Virtual Commons Citation

Edwards, Jason A. (2008). Defining the enemy for the post-Cold War world: Bill Clinton's foreign policy discourse on Somalia and Haiti. In *Communication Studies Faculty Publications*. Paper 6.
Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/commstud_fac/6

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

Defining the Enemy for the Post-Cold War World: Bill Clinton's Foreign Policy Discourse in Somalia and Haiti

JASON A. EDWARDS
Bridgewater State College

American presidents use images of savagery to identify and construct America's adversaries, especially prior to and during some form of armed intervention. During the Cold War, presidents used images of modern savagery to craft a Soviet enemy and its proxies. In the post-Cold War world, Bill Clinton did not have the luxury of a monolithic enemy to organize American foreign policy. He faced a threat environment that was more complex, transnational, and diffuse. Within this environment, I argue Clinton used images of primitive and modern savagery to define America's adversaries. An analysis of Clinton's discourse reveals that his use of both of these rhetorical forms broadened how presidents construct America's enemies. Moreover, the use of both images of savagery provided a rhetorical flexibility that was needed for the threat environment of the post-Cold War world. This essay contributes to deeper understandings of presidential rhetoric in general and crisis rhetoric in particular.

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union defined America's threat environment. The Soviets were the central organizing principle of American foreign policy discourse and action (Cameron, 2002; Cottam, 1992; Hinds & Windt, 1991). To depict the Soviet enemy, American presidents described the U.S.S.R. as an atheistic, fanatical, satanic, menacing totalitarian state bent on world domination (Ivie, 1984). These depictions cultivated an image of the Soviet Union as being the epitome of a savage, while the United States was the pillar of civilization that would stop the advances of communism. By cultivating an image of savagery, American presidents were able to establish Soviet culpability for a variety of violent actions within the Cold War environment (Ivie, 1980).

When the Cold War ended, the United States lost a central foe in which to do battle as well as the organizing principle of its foreign policy. Consequently, questions were raised amongst foreign policy makers such as: Who and what were the major threats the United States faced in the post-Cold War world? When and where should the United States use force? What limitations should be placed on American military interventions (see Ikenberry, 2001; Jentleson, 1997; MacGregor Burns & Sorensen, 1999)?

Jason A. Edwards: jasonedwards57@hotmail.com

Date submitted: 2008-01-04

Copyright © 2008 (Jason A. Edwards). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <http://ijoc.org>.

Questions also arose about how presidents would adapt their foreign policy discourse to a new threat environment. Kane (1991) argued that the post-Cold War world provided the opportunity for a "new vocabulary, not necessarily superior to the one replaced, but with important implications for the contemporary world" (p. 80). Part of that vocabulary would certainly contain characterizations of America's enemies in the post-Cold War world. *How* the characterizations of those enemies were crafted during the Clinton administration is the subject of this essay. I argue that Clinton had recognized that the United States would be facing a far different threat environment than that of his predecessors. To manage this threat environment, the president expanded the rhetorical options available for depicting a specific adversary. Specifically, my analysis reveals that Clinton employed images of both imperial and modern savagery to characterize America's enemies. The cultivation of two forms of savage imagery not only provided the president with more rhetorical flexibility, something necessary to deal with the diverse and complex threat environment of the post-Cold War world, but also it simultaneously allowed the president to reintroduce a symbolic form to define U.S. adversaries.

Scholars should take interest in Clinton's enemy construction rhetoric for two reasons. First, presidential enemy construction is one of the central components of a president's foreign policy vocabulary, and becomes a primary guide for understanding American foreign policy at large (Edwards, 2006; Judis, 2004). Yet, as Kane noted, the post-Cold War world supplied the opportunity for a different understanding of how this component would be used by American presidents, but it has received little explanation from scholars, especially for the Clinton presidency (see Cole, 1999; Kuypers, 1997; Olson, 2004; Stuckey, 1995). Understanding how Clinton crafted the depiction of America's adversaries provides the opportunity to examine how U.S. presidents attempt to manage a diverse group of threats and responses to those threats. It can lay the groundwork for a larger understanding of justifications for the use of force in a post-Cold War environment.

Second, the end of the Cold War brought with it a substantially different threat environment. Within this context, the Clinton administration reoriented and redefined U.S. foreign policy to deal with these threats. In fact, one of the central legacies of the Clinton administration was his "redefinition of the threat environment faced by the United States after the Cold War" (McCormick, 2000, p. 76). However, there has been little exploration of *how* Clinton redefined this threat environment. By studying Clinton's discourse on the subject, we can ascertain how his rhetoric may influence future administration strategies to deal with diffuse and transnational threats. Investigating the president's rhetoric on the subject offers insight into how he redefined that threat environment and the potential impact it may have on future administrations.

To explore this aspect of Clinton's foreign policy rhetoric, this essay is comprised of three parts. First, I examine the literature on presidential rhetoric and enemy construction. Second, I analyze Clinton's crafting of the depiction of the enemy in two military operations: Somalia and Haiti. I focused solely on how the president crafted the terminology of the adversary. I do so because the president is the most important political actor in foreign affairs. What he says and does means something. Certainly, the voices of other administration officials are important, but they largely make the same arguments as the president. Moreover, a president's discourse is the most crucial when it comes to understanding particular international situations. The discourse they put forth sets the boundaries and the agenda for how other

pundits and policy makers discuss and debate a certain subject (see Bostdorff, 1994; Edwards, 2006; Stuckey, 1995; Zarefsky, 2004). To that end, I conducted textual analyses of prominent speeches surrounding each military intervention and used the aforementioned theoretical framework as my guide in my examination. For the intervention into Somalia, Clinton defined the threat through the image of the imperial savage. In Haiti, however, Clinton characterized the threat through an image of modern savagery. Finally, I end with a discussion of implications from this analysis concerning Clinton's foreign policy and the future of the presidency.

Defining the Enemy in Presidential Rhetoric: Constructing Images of Primitive and Modern Savagery

The presidency is at the center of American political culture. Robert Denton, Jr. and Gary Woodward (1990) succinctly describe the importance of this political agent when they assert the presidency is "an office, a role, a persona, constructing a position of power, myth, legend, and persuasion. Everything a president does or says has implications and communicates 'something.' Every act, word, or phrase becomes calculated and measured for a response" (pp. 199-200). This is particularly true in foreign affairs, because on the one hand, he is constitutionally mandated to lead. Article II of the Constitution titles the president as "commander in chief" of the armed forces and gives him the power to "appoint ambassadors" and "to make treaties," with the advice and consent of the Senate. On the other hand, the president has a number of resources at his disposal, allowing him to obtain and dispense more information on international affairs than any other actor. Hence, the president is the dominant actor in this realm of policy.

One particular resource that U.S. presidents often use is the bully pulpit. Richard Neustadt (1990) rightly pointed out that one of the true powers of the modern presidency is to persuade. Neustadt's notion of persuasion partly focuses on the interpersonal level — how a president uses language to influence individual members of Congress — but the president's abilities to persuade rises when it uses mass audience appeals. The use of public discourse has become such an important phenomenon that Jeffrey Tulis (1987) went so far as to argue that the presidency has been transformed into a rhetorical institution. Presidents use rhetoric as a principle tool of governance to shape the public's perceptions on subjects and try to win support for various principles, positions, and policies. A president's rhetoric has a power to it that no one can match in the public arena. For Tulis, this power is "not only a form of communication, it is also a way of constituting the people to whom it is addressed by furnishing them with the very equipment they need to assess its use — the metaphors, categories, concepts of political discourse" (p. 203). Presidential rhetoric provides audiences with "equipment" to understand the political landscape around them.

This equipment for understanding the political landscape is even more important in foreign policy because it is through rhetoric that a president can demonstrate his leadership, shape public perceptions about various issues, and influence audiences about various places, issues, and situations from his discourse (see Beasley, 2004; Bostdorff, 1994; Campbell & Jamieson, 1990; Dorsey, 2002; Kiewe 1994; Stuckey, 2004). Most Americans have very little knowledge of the issues and threats that the United States faces in the international arena, let alone knowledge of other nation-states, organizations, or

groups. The world can be a bizarre and scary place for many (Kuusisto, 1998). They count upon the president to offer a semblance of order to the world around us, and it is through the use of language that presidents convey that sense of order. It is through rhetoric that presidents can inform the populace of what goes on in the international arena. It is through presidential rhetoric where many come to understand the outside world. Thus, rhetoric becomes a primary instrument for presidential foreign policy.

Presidential speech-making on foreign policy functions in at least two important ways. Generally, presidential foreign policy rhetoric serves two broad functions. First, a president's foreign policy discourse can shape the political reality of foreign affairs. Murray Edelman (1988) noted that language is a "key creator of the world's people experience" (p. 103). People do not experience specific events, but experience the language of events. This is not to say that specific situations and contexts do not influence a speaker, but it is the language used to discuss various ideas and situations that create and connect people to various "worlds." In international affairs, American presidents are the most prominent speakers and they use language shapes the public's understanding of the world around us.

The ability to create and shape political reality comes through the president's power of definition. David Zarefsky (2004) argued that political realities are not "given," but rather are constructed from a variety of possibilities. In foreign policy, because they have the most knowledge of foreign affairs, along with extraordinary political power and speak with single voice, presidents have the ability to define how issues, ideas, and situations are viewed. This does not mean that when presidents define the reality of American international relations it will resonate with everyone. Nevertheless, the president's prominence within American politics gives him the power to shape how foreign policy is viewed and understood.

A second function of presidential foreign policy rhetoric is that it is didactic. Edwin Hargrove (1998) argued the first task of presidential leadership is to:

teach reality to publics and their fellow politicians through rhetoric . . . Teaching reality involves the explanations of contemporary problems and issues, but at its best, must invoke and interpret the perennial ideals of the American national experience as expressed in the past and the present, and as guides for our future. (pp. vii-viii)

Teaching reality to the American public involves telling it stories about distant countries, little known cultures, and abstract values (Kuusisto, 1998). A president's discourse on foreign policy imparts a reality that outlines a symbolic universe of allies and adversaries. In this universe, the United States is the defender of civilization through the promotion and protection of its values. A violation of this order by an adversary — an attack against the United States, one of its allies, or against innocents — threatens that order. Once a president declares that such a danger exists then it becomes universal — a threat against civilization itself — and needs to be countered, possibly with military intervention (Bates, 2004; Butler, 2002; Ivie, 1980, 1982; Procter, 1987). To fully demonstrate how this enemy violated America's foreign policy order, presidents shape the "other" through articulating images of savagery in defining a particular enemy (Lebow, 2000).

Through extensive study, rhetorical scholars have determined that presidents have used two forms of savage imagery to depict America's enemies: the primitive or imperial savage and the modern savage. The former is characterized as "a primitive society, an image of a decentralized enemy, a culture rather than an evil individual or government" (Butler, 2002, p. 18). The imperial savage consists of a particular people or culture instead of a central government or leader. The enemy agent in question is primitive because there are no real discernible signs of civilization (i.e., no functioning government institutions or structure).

Using images of primitive savagery has a long history within the United States, primarily in portrayals of Native Americans. Political leaders, the media, and popular culture have depicted Native Americans as being "emblematic of chaos" who were "living without government," leading lives that were freed from the "restraints of family, church, and village," but engaged in acts of "incest, cannibalism, devil worship, and murder" (Rogin, 1987, p. 45). According to this argument, Native Americans were devoid of any semblance of civilization. Consequently, native peoples needed to be "civilized," which entailed various paternal relationships in which the U.S. government declared the tribes as "wards" while the government was their "guardian." According to the government, these relationships could help move Native Americans from the habits of barbarism to the habits of civilization (Rogin, 1987). The implication of this discourse was that it supplied ample justification for the government's forced removal of indigenous peoples, along with the rape, torture, and murder of tens of thousands.

Eventually, America's leaders started using images of primitive savagery to shape the enemies we face in foreign policy (see Bass & Cherwitz, 1978; Coles, 2002; Merk, 1963; Stephenson, 1995; Winkler, 2002). For example, President McKinley and his supporters used this image of savagery to justify America's conquest of the Philippines. John Butler explained that American politicians depicted the Filipinos as a barbarous, primitive race that could not understand the advantages of civilization. They were "primitive savages caught within a pre-modern condition, aimlessly moving in no practical direction" (Butler, 2002, p. 19). Because of their inability to understand civilization, Filipinos had no opportunity to evolve. Therefore, they required the help of the United States, just as Native Americans did, to put them on the path to an evolved order. However, this form of savage imagery was largely unused by American presidents in foreign policy during the 20th century. Instead, presidents manufactured enemies through the image of a modern savage.

A modern savage is represented as a particular leader or a government perpetrating acts of aggression against the civilized order, which includes deeds against the United States, one of its allies, or the savage agent's own population. In the vast majority of military interventions, the president defines the enemy as modern (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990; Ivie, 1974, 1980, 1982, 1987). This enemy is "modern" because it is a "centralized evil agent selfishly pursuing his or her goals without a regard for the nation's people" (Butler, 2002, p. 13). This evil agent has a "level of cultural sophistication that is threatening to western culture" (Butler, 2002, p. 14). In other words, the modern savage has some semblance of civilization that is *visible* through its working governmental structure anchored by institutions. However, this agent is *savage* because it is bent on subjugating its foes by force of arms. The discourse used to depict this enemy dehumanizes him, making the agent appear irrational and evil. If

the enemy is irrational, then it has the propensity for unchecked aggression against America's civilized order. Therefore, it must be defeated.

Now to create these images of savagery, rhetors employ various *topoi* or specific lines of argument, which Robert Ivie referred to as "decivilizing vehicles." These vehicles are rhetorical conduits that describe the enemy itself and/or the particular acts of the savage (Ivie, 2004). These *topoi* are used to articulate "the key contrastive features distinguishing civilized from savage agents while synthesizing several dimensions of meaning into an integrated threat" (Ivie, 2004, p. 79). In other words, decivilizing vehicles shape the savage agent as a negative force while implying the United States as a force for good.

There are two contrastive features a rhetor may utilize to demonize the enemy. First, rhetors may use derogatory terms such as referring to an adversarial agent as a "terrorist," a "murderer," a "barbarian," a "thug," a "dictator," and/or a litany of other names. Second, the president may accuse the agent(s) and their forces of specific acts of aggression such as arson, forced migration, rape, or murder. By delineating these actions, his rhetoric demonstrated the true savage nature of the enemy with the implication being that no civilized agent, especially the United States, would commit the wanton rape, torture, and murder against anyone, let alone innocents. Thus, people who commit such acts must be savages.

Cultivating an image of the enemy serves three functions. First, the use of decivilizing vehicles literalizes the enemy. The enemy, who has been constructed as savage, actually appears as a savage in the minds of the audience (Bates, 2004; Ivie, 2004). Second, the use of those decivilizing vehicles strips away any qualities of civilization attributable to the agent, making it untenable for audiences to identify with that enemy. When the adversary is rhetorically contrasted with the United States, this description gives the appearance of American superiority. Finally, cultivating an image of the "other" helps the president rally public support for his decision to intervene through forces of arms (Bates, 2004; Edelman, 1988). Constructing an enemy provides a focal point for the public to direct their anger. A specific enemy, typically, supplies the motive for America's use of force.

Defining the Enemy in Somalia and Haiti

From the moment Clinton entered office, he spoke of a new threat environment. In this new era, threats to the United States would be composed of "ancient hatreds and new plagues" that involved "bloody ethnic, religious, and civil wars . . . weapons of mass destruction . . . hunger and disease . . . malignant neglect of the global environment . . . and terrorism" (1993a, p. 1). The problems that Clinton confronted were transnational, complex, diverse, and diffuse; making the international environment he faced just as dangerous the Cold War. In this complicated atmosphere, there were specific circumstances when Clinton resorted to military intervention. These situations gave the president the opportunity "to characterize the circumstances compelling action" (Campbell & Jamieson, 1990, p. 107).

In the next two sections, I outline how Clinton crafted the depiction of America's adversaries in Somalia and Haiti. I focus on the words and phrases Clinton used to characterize America's foe. When taken together, these words and phrases paint a picture of a primitive and modern savage.

Constructing the Primitive Savage: Somalia

Clinton inherited the Somalia situation from the previous Bush administration. The Somalia crisis began in 1988 as the civilian government under Siad Barre, Somalia's leader since 1969, was overthrown in a coup. Barre's overthrow left a power vacuum that soon resulted in civil war and a humanitarian crisis (Besteman, 1992; Butler, 2002). By the fall of 1992, almost a half a million Somalis had died from armed conflict or starvation. The United Nations had attempted a relief mission for Somalia, but it could not complete its mission because of the ongoing violence within the country. The inability to fulfill its humanitarian mission led the UN Security Council, with the support of the United States, to order a new UN humanitarian mission where the United States would provide the lead in creating security for the country (Hirsh & Oakley, 1996). In December of 1992, President George H.W. Bush assigned 25,000 military personnel to help carry out the relief mission.

At first, the operation appeared to progress well in Somalia. So well, that when Clinton welcomed American troops home in May of 1993, he declared the Somalia intervention as a "mission accomplished" (1993b, p. 565). However, from June to October 1993, American and UN forces came under ferocious attacks by Somalis, for the most part under the direction of Somali General Mohammed Aided. The largest attack on American forces came on October 4, 1993, causing the death of 18 Army rangers, injuries to scores more, and capture of Army helicopter pilot, Michael Durant. Americans were stunned by the images of American soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu and pressure mounted upon the administration to withdraw American ground forces. On October 7, 1993, Clinton announced a plan to temporarily continue the Somalia operation to stabilize the country, but indicated the United States would remove its forces by the end of March 1994 (Dauber, 2001).

Throughout the conflict in Somalia, Clinton defined America's adversary as a primitive savage in two ways. First, his enemy construction was made through vague labels and amorphous terms. For example, he characterized the Somalia belligerents as "warlords," (1993b, p. 566; 1993c, p. 840) "armed gangs," (1993c, p. 840) a "small minority of Somalis" (1993c, p. 840) and "the people who caused much of this problem" (1993d, p. 1703). From this rhetoric, three items should be noted. Initially, using these terms invited the audience to see that no visible sign of civilization could be found in Somali society and among the "people who caused much of this problem." Rather, ambiguous and amorphous terms such as *warlords*, *armed gangs*, and *merely a people* projected an image of a nation engulfed in lawlessness and chaos. The term "warlord" evokes memories of those who dominated the feudal ages of Europe, Russia, Japan, and China, not leaders of a nation-state at the end of the 20th century. Calling those who caused this chaos "warlords" and "armed gangs" further implied there was no governmental authority to stop these belligerents. The president implicitly defined Somalia as a premodern civilization unable to rein in the belligerents and achieve self-rule without help from the United States and the international community. Moreover, as chaos reigned supreme within Somalia, the problems emanating from this African nation were a microcosm of the larger threats the United States faced in the post-Cold War world. By Clinton defining Somalis as primitive savages, he gave the impression the African nation could not survive without international intervention; without some semblance of "civilized" intervention the underlying implication was that Somali society would further devolve into anarchy.

Another item to note is that Clinton's enemy construction was qualitatively different than that of his Cold War predecessors. During the Cold War, presidents focused their rhetorical attention upon a central enemy agent, typically the Soviet Union, which became the focal point of American action. While Clinton did not blame one specific agent for Somalia's problems, his depiction of the Somali enemy was similar to the Filipino antecedent at the turn of the 20th century. At that time, American rhetors depicted Filipinos as a barbarous race incapable of maintaining a democratic form of government. Americans in the Philippines battled an insurgency that had no centralized authority. According to Senator Albert Beveridge and President McKinley, the Philippines were a premodern civilization in which Filipinos were not "fit" to govern themselves. Hence, they needed the assistance of the United States to aid in their evolution (Butler, 2002; Drinnon, 1980). Clinton reintroduced this enemy depiction into the presidential lexicon. The president argued that the enemy in Somalia was not a centralized agent, but an entire premodern civilization. By implication, the Somalis needed American assistance to help them become civilized. Furthermore, reintroducing this imperial antecedent into presidential foreign policy discourse broadened the rhetorical options Clinton and his successors had available to define adversaries in the post-Cold War world.

Finally, Clinton's vague language made it more difficult for the public to directly pinpoint who was responsible for the daily threats to American and UN soldiers, rhetorically undercutting the ability to rally public support for an intervention. It is much easier to envision rallying support to deal with a centralized enemy than an amorphous one. Cherwitz and Zagacki (1986) noted in their study of presidential crisis rhetoric, "whether or not presidents take military action, the very act of discoursing allows rekindling of ideological fervor and use of this fervor to rally public opinion around a central issue" (p. 318). A "central issue" of an armed intervention is stopping the enemy and its belligerency. A centralized agent allows a president to focus on a clear and specific enemy that can be vanquished. However, Clinton's use of ambiguous imagery gave the public no focal point, no chance to kindle the "ideological fervor" and support of the vanquishing of a clearly defined enemy. A chaotic enemy provided little to no rhetorical grounds to make the case for continuing the intervention, especially after the debacle on October 4. Simply put, the president's discourse made it difficult for him to gain any public support to finish the job in Somalia.

Aside from the president's ambiguous use of language to define the Somali enemy, Clinton also eschewed the use of de-civilizing vehicles to label the agents responsible for the killing and destruction in Somalia. Rather, his description of the situation in Somalia dealt with the *results* of the atrocities committed by the "warlords." For example, Clinton stated that these "warlords" created a chaotic scene where "over 350,000 Somalis already had died in a bloody civil war, shrouding the nation in famine and disease" (1993c, p. 840). These agents of evil created a civil war that brought an "agonizing death of starvation, a starvation brought on not only by drought, but also by the anarchy that then prevailed in that country" (1993d, p. 1704). The armed gangs were "determined to provoke terror and chaos" and to stop the vast majority of Somalis "who long for peace" (1993c, p. 840) from enjoying stability and security. The president's discussion of the aftermath of Somalia's civil war portrayed the African nation as a place of anarchy. The famine and death caused by the civil war — the situational chaos — provided a primary justification for maintaining an American intervention. The logic of Clinton's rhetoric was that the

chaos in Somalia had to be managed and curtailed, lest it spread to other places and endanger American interests in the Red Sea region.

Clinton's use of scene was a curious one. I say so because, typically, presidents highlight the specific actions of the agent, not scene, as a line of argument for deploying U.S. forces to a particular area of the world. Only in one other form of military intervention, "rescue missions," scene has been theorized as an important form of *topoi*. Procter (1987) argued that presidents who use rescue mission rhetoric do not assign blame to the savage agent. Rather, blame is assigned to the scene. Procter went on to argue that the scene infuses the savage agents with qualities of lawlessness, violence, and lack of control. Therefore, in "rescue mission" rhetoric, controlling a chaotic scene, not defeating an enemy agent, becomes the purpose for military intervention.

Considering that scene is already an important line of argument for presidents in discussing "rescue missions," I suggest that controlling a chaotic scene can also be a rhetorical *topos* for painting an enemy as a primitive savage. Butler (2002) asserted that the imperial savage is a decentralized enemy, either a people or a culture; however, he never emphasized how a rhetor may create such an image. As I noted earlier, presidents traditionally construct enemies through the use of decivilizing vehicles, consisting of two kinds of contrastive features, which dehumanize the enemy. Clinton's discourse revealed that another contrastive feature to add in constructing the enemy "other" was scene. The qualities of the chaotic scene of Somalia — famine, death, refugees, homelessness, anarchy — became native attributes to the citizens of that nation. Controlling the chaotic scene, not the defeat of a diabolical foe, became the purpose for American intervention. By intervening, the U.S. could stabilize the situation and bring the chaos under control.

Ultimately, Clinton manufactured an image of primitive savagery to depict the Somali belligerents. His discourse also implied that Somalia was a backward, lawless society that was a possible threat to America's symbolic order. At the same time, his use of imperial savage imagery broadened the rhetorical arsenal that presidents use to reconstruct the threat environment in the post-Cold War world. Clinton's use of this imagery expanded our understanding of this discourse frame. In constructing the adversary in Haiti, Clinton turned to the more familiar lines of argument of modern savagery.

Defining the Modern Savage: Haiti

Clinton inherited an unresolved situation in Haiti from the Bush administration. In December 1990, Haiti conducted its first free and fair election in which Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a young Catholic priest, became the first democratically elected president of Haiti (Kuypers, 1997). However, nine months later on September 30, 1991, Haiti's military leaders overthrew Aristide and imposed a military dictatorship. President Bush immediately condemned the coup and issued an executive order declaring a trade embargo, but Bush took a cautious position with regard to intervention in the Caribbean nation. He negotiated with Haiti's military through the Organization of American States (OAS) in hopes that the organization could put pressure on the military junta to leave the island and restore Aristide peacefully.

Over the next few months, Bush continued his policy of trade sanctions, but also received pressure from various interest groups and states to take greater action because of the massive refugee exodus from the island. More than 50,000 people attempted to leave the island nation over the next year or so. When Clinton became president, he largely continued the policies of his predecessor. Finally, in July 1993, Aristide and General Raoul Cédras, the Haitian military junta leader, reached an account, what became known as the Governors Island Agreement, where the military promised to step down from power by the end of October 1993 and allow Aristide to return to power. The United States' part in the agreement would be that it would help with a massive aid package to rebuild the country and the American military would train a Haitian civilian police force that would provide security for the country.

That plan was put on hold when, on October 11, 1993, the *USS Harlan County*, carrying American and Canadian military trainers, was not allowed to dock in Port-au-Prince. Armed junta supporters lined the docks of Port-au-Prince protesting the American landing. The American and Canadian military personnel were lightly armed and because of the impending danger caused by junta supporters, the *Harlan County* returned to the United States (Hyland, 1999). Clinton blamed the Haitian military for "reneging" on the agreement. According to the president, Haiti's military leaders wanted to "cling to power for a little bit longer," thus, the trainers were not allowed to land in Haiti. In essence, the *Harlan County* crisis killed the Governors Island Agreement.

Over the next year, Clinton rhetorically remained committed to restoring Haiti's democracy. In July 1994, the United States persuaded the UN Security Council to pass a resolution authorizing the use of force to compel the return of Aristide (Hyland, 1999). The following month Clinton decided to prepare for an invasion of Haiti to restore Aristide to power. Finally, on September 15, the president used a national address to announce his plans for Haiti. The president declared that the United States had exhausted all diplomatic efforts, yet the situation had not been resolved. Subsequently, Clinton warned Haiti's military leaders that they must leave the country or be prepared for an American invasion.

In justifying American military action in Haiti, Clinton (1994) defined the enemy as the epitome of a modern savage. The president laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of "Haiti's dictators, led by Raoul Cédras" (p. 1558). These dictators controlled "the most violent regime in our hemisphere" (p. 1558). They have created a "reign of terror" and must "bear full responsibility" for the death and destruction they caused (p. 1558). Clinton went further to cultivate the modern savage image by enumerating the atrocities committed by Cédras and the junta. The president stated that Cédras's military conducted operations involving "executing children, raping women, killing priests" (p. 1558). Moreover, the Haitian dictator's "reign of terror" involved murdering "innocent civilians," crushing "political freedom," and plundering "Haiti's economy" (p. 1558). Those who resisted the junta were "beaten and murdered," and ultimately, the military government "launched a horrible campaign of rape, torture, and mutilation. People starved, children died, thousands of Haitians fled their country, heading to the United States across dangerous seas" (p. 1558).

Now Clinton's depiction of the enemy and the atrocities committed bring several items of note for the reader. First, notice the president's language was a mixture of both the past and present tense. Using both tenses demonstrated a continuum of action taken by the Haitian dictator. In other words, Cédras

and the junta committed and continued to commit acts that were best understood as a "reign of terror." According to Clinton, Cédras "launched" campaigns of terrors where people "starved," "died," and had "fled" the country. These atrocities continued into the present with a campaign of "executing," "raping," and "killing" innocent civilians. The president's stark and active language gave the impression that Cédras's campaign of terror was ongoing; something that needed to be stopped immediately, lest thousands of people be left to suffer. Clinton's language invited the audience to see the Haitian threat as an imminent crisis that could spread and spill over onto American shores if immediate action was not taken.

Additionally, Clinton's depiction of the enemy made, in Burkean terms, Cédras a centralized pollutant in America's symbolic universe. According to Burke (1961) all people organize their lives through a symbolic order and a specific hierarchy. If something occurs that contradicts that order, then it becomes polluted and needs to be purified in some way. Typically, the pollution is removed by assigning guilt to a responsible party. Blame is assigned in two ways: mortification or victimage. Mortification is an assignment of guilt to oneself. Victimage is assigning guilt to someone else. This assignment of guilt helps to purify the pollution from the order and restore equilibrium.

Similarly, U.S. presidents create a foreign policy universe through their language, with the United States being at the top of its hierarchical order. When an agent commits acts of aggression, especially within the U.S. sphere of influence, it violates America's symbolic order, creating a pollutant that must be removed. According to Clinton, Cédras was to blame for the atrocities within Haiti. Cédras violated America's symbolic order by ordering atrocities committed in America's backyard, resulting in the killing of innocent civilians, as well as an exodus of thousands of refugees which threatened America's coastline. By placing the blame for Haiti's plight upon the shoulders of Cédras, Clinton laid the groundwork to expunge the "pollutant" from America's foreign policy hierarchy. Through military intervention, the United States could fully remove the pollution and restore stability to its symbolic universe.

This centralized, organized, and modern savage became a clear and distinct focal point for the U.S. military response. The president could specifically point to Raoul Cédras as the culprit for Haiti's problems as well as someone who had become a threat to American national security. By cultivating the image of a central enemy figure, the president laid the groundwork for a military intervention where the mission was clear. A clear mission and a clear enemy make the public more apt to support a president's call for military intervention into another state.

Moreover, Clinton's discourse made it difficult for anyone in the audience to identify positively with the Haitian general. In exploring how George H.W. Bush constructed the image of Saddam Hussein, Bates (2004) observed that in order for a person not to see Saddam Hussein as a savage, s/he must argue that violations of international law, aggression against a sovereign state, and the murder of children are the not the acts of a savage" (p. 454). Correspondingly, Clinton made Cédras synonymous with a modern savage. By delineating the "reign of terror" the Haitian leader had launched against his citizens, Clinton's language stripped him of any civilized identity he might have possessed, making it impossible to identify him as anything but a savage. The implication being that the audience was left with the choice to support America's intervention into Haiti.

Fifth, note the difference between Clinton's enemy construction for Haiti when compared with Somalia. The primary difference between the two interventions was that the president eschewed the use of decivilizing vehicles when discussing Somalia. Instead, he emphasized the chaotic scene within Somalia, instead of a particular agent. The American mission in Somalia was to stabilize, as best it could, the chaotic scene, not remove the root troubles within the nation-state. By contrast, Clinton's Haiti discourse emphasized the culpability of a savage agent. Cédras's "reign of terror," according to Clinton, was premeditated, and planned. It was a created chaos. As a result, the agent, Cédras, became the motive force for an American intervention in Haiti, where the mission was to remove the ruling junta, restoring stability to the island nation.

Finally, Clinton's use of modern savage imagery in Haiti continued a long-standing tradition of presidents using similar lines of argument. As Windt (1973) put it, "the lines of argument a President chooses come from the office of the presidency and from tradition." They "rely on lines of argument that other modern presidents have used in similar situations" (pp. 6-7). President Clinton's rhetorical construction of the threat in Haiti was similar to previous presidents who utilized similar lines of arguments to depict modern foes such as the Soviet Union, Manuel Noriega, and Saddam Hussein. The president's discourse maintained continuity with this rhetorical past.

Implications

In this essay, I investigated and analyzed how Bill Clinton crafted the representation of America's foes in a post-Cold War world. I argued that Clinton utilized two different forms of savagery to depict America's adversaries in Somalia and Haiti. The president, unlike his Cold War predecessors, did not have the luxury of a monolithic enemy around which he could organize his foreign policy discourse. To deal with the post-Cold War threat environment, Clinton expanded the rhetorical options he had to construct America's adversaries. He reintroduced the use of images of primitive savagery into a president's rhetorical arsenal. For the president, using both images of savagery assisted in navigating American foreign policy through a complex, post-Cold War threat environment. Overall, this investigation leads me to three implications concerning Clinton's foreign policy discourse.

First, an analysis of Clinton's discourse expands our ideas about how we theorize images of savagery are cultivated. As I noted at the outset of this essay, typically, images of savagery were cultivated through decivilizing vehicles. These vehicles are agent-centered. However, Clinton's Somalia discourse eschewed decivilizing vehicles and instead was scene-centered, which he also utilized in the Bosnia intervention (Edwards & Stevenson, 2006). I suggest that when cultivating an image of primitive savage presidents emphasize scene as an important line of argument to craft this image. Based on Clinton's discourse we can add this idea as another element in imperial savage *topoi*.

Second, the president's use of both images of savagery offers insight into the larger threat environment he faced. In the post-Cold War world, America's central enemy was not a particular nation-state, but was global chaos. As Kathryn Olson (2004) rightly noted, "global chaos in all its various forms, as the central foil" (p. 309). Global chaos, as Clinton understood it, was a multi-headed created that

shape-shifted from moment to moment. Part of this hydra was the specter of ethnic violence and rogue military states, such as Somalia and Haiti. In confronting this kind of enemy, the president could not rely on a singular rhetorical construct to shape America's adversaries. Rather, he needed adaptability and flexibility within his discourse to deal with different situations. Thus, in one sense, Clinton's discourse was "chaotic" because there was no set pattern he could rely upon, as it had been in the Cold War, to deal with an ever shape-shifting enemy. This was understandable if you consider the president's discourse in the larger frame of a threat environment underwritten by chaos. By employing both images of savagery, the president was able to define, navigate, and manage these situations.

Finally, Clinton's use of both primitive and modern savagery may have left a symbolic legacy for future presidents in terms of how they define and manage various threats. A symbolic legacy is, as Olson (2004) put it, "the symbolic frames that it makes available for reproduction" (p. 309). Surely, future American presidents will engage in the use of force and perhaps need the availability of both enemy constructs in their rhetorical arsenal. President George W. Bush's rhetoric on Iraq resembles Clinton's definition of enemies in similar ways. For example, at the outset, President Bush defined Saddam Hussein as the ultimate modern savage, a centralized agent who could use the coordination of his government institutions to cause havoc for the United States and its allies. However, once Saddam Hussein was removed from power, Bush's depictions of the enemy changed. Bush continued to lay the blame upon the usual suspects such as Al-Qaeda in Iraq, but the president also resorted to defining the Iraqi enemy in diffuse terms, as Clinton did in Somalia. One representative instance can be found in the 2005 White House document entitled "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq." In that document, the administration argued that the "enemy" in Iraq is a group of "rejectionists, Saddamists, and terrorists" (p. 5). The enemy shares an opposition to the elected Iraqi government, but otherwise has "separate and to some extent incompatible goals" (p. 5). As in Somalia, the Bush administration portrays the Iraqi belligerents as a diffuse, fragmented, uncoordinated group that causes daily lawlessness. But the fragmented, uncoordinated nature of the Iraqi enemy makes it just as "primitive" as the enemy within Somalia. Hence, you have Bush depicting America's enemies in both modern and primitive terms to manage the conflict. Considering that the threats facing the United States are not about to abate anytime soon, one may find future presidents constructing enemies in both primitive and modern terms. Future research will have to determine the extent to which these two symbolic frames are used.

As American presidents continue to face a more complex world, including the current "war on terror," there will be situations in which presidents will use symbolic forms of savagery to depict America's enemies. The use of both forms can certainly be understood as a symptom of change in American foreign policy. This research suggests that those symptoms may continue. In the future, scholars should work to unpack not only Bill Clinton's foreign policy legacy, but also the methodology with which the United States defines nation-states and groups around them. In doing so, rhetorical scholars can assuredly enable us to understand the fragmented and interdependent world in which we live.

References

- Bass, J.D. & Cherwitz, R.A. (1978). Imperial mission and manifest destiny. *Southern Speech Communication Journal*, 47, 213-222.
- Bates, B. R. (2004). Audiences, metaphors, and the Persian Gulf War. *Communication Studies*, 55, 447-463.
- Beasley, V.B. (2004). *You the people: American national identity in presidential rhetoric*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press.
- Besteman, C. (1999). *Unraveling Somalia: Race, violence, and the legacy of slavery*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bostdorff, D.M. (1994). *The presidency and the rhetoric of foreign crisis*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.
- Bowden, M. (1999). *Black hawk down: A story of modern war*. New York: Grove Atlantic.
- Burke, K. (1961). *The rhetoric of religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Butler, J.R. (2002). Somalia and the imperial savage: Continuities in the rhetoric of war. *Western Journal of Communication*, 66, 1-24.
- Campbell, K. K., & Jamieson, K.H. (1990). *Deeds done in words: Presidential rhetoric and the genres of governance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cameron, F. (2002). *U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War*. London: Routledge.
- Cherwitz, R.A., & Zagacki, K. (1986). Consummatory versus justificatory crisis rhetoric. *Western Journal of Communication*, 50, 311-325.
- Clinton, W.J. (1993a, January 20). Inaugural address. *The public papers of the President* (pp. 1-4). Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office.
- Clinton, W.J. (1993b, May 5). Remarks on welcoming military personnel returning from Somalia. *The public papers of the president* (pp. 565-566). Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office.
- Clinton, W.J. (1993c, June 12). The president's radio address. *The public papers of the president* (pp. 839-840). Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office.

- Clinton, W.J. (1993d, October 7). Address to the nation on Somalia. *The Public papers of the president* (pp. 1703-1706). Washington, D.C.: The United States Government Printing Office.
- Clinton, W.J. (1994, September 15). Address to the nation on Haiti. *The public papers of the president* (pp. 1558-1562). Washington, D.C.: The United States Government Printing Office.
- Cole, T.M. (1999). Avoiding the quagmire: Alternative rhetorical constructions for the post-Cold War world. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2, 367-393.
- Coles, R. L. (2002). Manifest destiny adapted for 1990's war discourse: Mission and destiny intertwined. *Sociology of Religion*, 63, 403-426.
- Cottam, M.A. (1992). Contending dramas in American foreign policy. In M. L. Cottam & C. Shin (Eds.) *Contending dramas: A cognitive approach to international organizations* (pp. 132-158). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Dauber, C. (2001). The shot seen around the world: The impact of the images of Mogadishu on American military operations. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4, 653-687.
- Denton, R.E., Jr., & Woodward, G.C. (1990). *Political communication in America, 2nd edition*. New York: Praeger.
- Dorsey, L. (2002). *The presidency and rhetorical leadership*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press.
- Drinnon, R. (1980). *Facing the west: The metaphysics of Indian-hating and empire building*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Edelman, M. (1988). *Constructing the political spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Edwards, J.A. (2006). *Foreign policy rhetoric for the post-Cold War world: Bill Clinton and America's foreign policy vocabulary*. Unpublished Dissertation. Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University.
- Edwards, J.A., & Stevenson, K.A. (2006). The peacekeeping mission: Bill Clinton and Bosnia. A paper presented at the 2006 Eastern Communication Association Conference, Philadelphia, PA.
- Hargrove, E. (1998). *The president as leader: Appealing to the better angels of our nature*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.
- Hirsh, J. L., & Oakley, R. (1996). *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on peacemaking and peacekeeping*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

- Hinds, L.B., & Windt, Jr., T.O. (1991). *The Cold War as rhetoric: The beginnings, 1945-1950*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Hyland, W.G. (1999). *Clinton's world: The remaking of American foreign policy*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999.
- Ikenberry, G. J. (2001). *After victory: Institutions, strategic restraint, and the rebuilding of order after major wars*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ivie, R.L. (1974). Presidential motives for war. *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 60, 337-345.
- Ivie, R.L. (1980). Images of savagery in American justifications for war. *Communication Monographs*, 47, 279-290.
- Ivie, R.L. (1982). The metaphor of force in prowar discourse: The case of 1812. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 68, 240-253.
- Ivie, R.L. (1984). Speaking 'common sense' about the Soviet threat: Reagan's rhetorical stance. *The Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 48, 39-50.
- Ivie, R.L. (1987). The ideology of freedom's 'fragility' in foreign policy argument. *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, 24, 27-36.
- Ivie, R. L. (2004). Democracy, war, and decivilizing metaphors of American insecurity. In F.A. Beer & C. de Landscheer *Metaphorical global politics* (pp. 75-90). East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.
- Judis, J.B. (2004). *The folly of empire: What George W. Bush could learn from Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson*. New York: Scribner.
- Kane, T. (1991). Foreign policy suppositions and commanding ideas. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 28, 80-90.
- Kiewe, A. (1991). *The modern presidency and crisis rhetoric*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Kuusisto, R. (1998). Framing wars in the Gulf and Bosnia: The rhetorical definitions of western power leaders in action. *Journal of Peace Research*, 35, 603-620.
- Kuypers, J.A. (1997). *Presidential crisis rhetoric and the press in the Post-Cold War World*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Lebow, R. (2000). Psychological dimensions of post-Cold War foreign policy. In S. Renshon (Ed.) *The Clinton presidency: Campaigning, governing, and the psychology of leadership* (pp. 235-245). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- MacGregor Burns, J., & Sorenson, G. (1999). *Dead center: Clinton-Gore leadership and the perils of moderation*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- McCormick, J. M. (2000). Clinton and foreign policy: Some legacies for a new century. In S.E. Schier (Ed.) *The postmodern presidency: Bill Clinton's legacy in U.S. politics* (pp. 62-82). Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Merk, F. (1963). *Manifest destiny and mission in American history: A reinterpretation*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- National Strategy for Victory in Iraq*. (2005, November 30). Retrieved November 28, 2006 from www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/iraq/iraq_strategy_nov2005.html
- Neustadt, R. (1990). *Presidential power: The politics of leadership*. New York: Wiley.
- Olson, K. M. (2004). Democratic enlargement's value hierarchy and rhetorical forms: An analysis of Clinton's use of post-Cold War symbolic frame to justify military interventions. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 34, 307-340.
- Procter, D.E. (1987). The rescue mission: Assigning guilt to a chaotic scene. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 51, 245-255.
- Rogin, M. (1987). *Ronald Reagan, the movie and other episodes of political demonology*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ryan, D. (2000). *U.S. foreign policy in world history*. New York: Routledge.
- Stephenson, A. (1995). *Manifest destiny: American expansionism and the empire of right*. New York: Hill & Wang.
- Stuckey, M.E. (1995). Competing foreign policy visions: Rhetorical hybrids after the Cold War. *Western Journal of Communication*, 59, 214-227.
- Stuckey, M. E. (2004). *Defining Americans: The presidency and national identity*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.
- Tulis, J. (1998). *The rhetorical presidency*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Windt, Jr., T.O. (1973). The presidency and speeches on international crises: Repeating the rhetorical past. *Speaker & Gavel*, 11, 1-9.

Winkler, C.W. (2002). Manifest destiny on a global scale: The U.S. war on terrorism. *Controversia*, 1, 85-105.

Zarefsky, D. (2004). Presidential rhetoric and the power of definition. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 34, 607-620.